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RR RUEHTRO
DE RUEHAM #2358 2250951
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 120951Z AUG 08
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3298
INFO RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD 6048
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 3745
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS 3945
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 1997
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 1283
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI 0030
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 5118
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC

UNCLAS AMMAN 002358

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ELA AND EEB
STATE PLEASE PASS TO USTR (JENNIFER GROVES, SONIA FRANCESKI)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KIPR](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: JFDA CONTINUES EFFORTS TO FIGHT COUNTERFEIT DRUGS

REF: A. AMMAN 2337

[B](#). 07 AMMAN 3291

[1](#). (U) Summary: The Jordanian government has bolstered its efforts against counterfeit drugs, which the Jordan Food and Drug Administration (JFDA) believes has helped cause a drop in fake medicine coming across Jordan's borders since last year (ref B). Most recently, in a high profile case, Jordanian authorities arrested the first female head of a political party for manufacturing and selling fraudulent medicine (ref A). End Summary.

[2](#). (SBU) JFDA Director General Mohammad Rawashdeh told Econoffs August 10 that Jordan has seen fewer counterfeit drugs coming across its borders since last year, possibly due to increased inspections and border visits by JFDA which have acted as a deterrent. JFDA even inspects transit-only goods, reasoning that fake drugs destined for neighboring countries might eventually make their way back to Jordan. Rawashdeh also noted that a new public health law, if approved, would provide another significant deterrent by subjecting pharmacists to increased penalties of up to 10,000 JD (\$14,124) in fines and three to five years in prison for counterfeit drugs. Additionally, they would have to pay double the market price for each fake pill.

[3](#). (SBU) JFDA's most recent success entailed a high profile case that led to the arrest of Muna Hussein Abu Baker, coincidentally the first woman to lead a Jordanian political party. Rawashdeh indicated that JFDA had received complaints about Baker and her brother selling fake medicine. In particular, the renown King Hussein Cancer Center (KHCC) asked for JFDA assistance when some of its patients decided to leave KHCC and try out the Bakers' remedies, only to return months later when the disease had progressed to such an extent that KHCC could no longer treat it. When JFDA tried to inspect the Bakers' offices, however, the inspectors could never find any medicine or other incriminating evidence.

[4](#). (SBU) Rawashdeh said that a Libyan citizen then contacted Baker to obtain medicine for curing his father's Alzheimer's disease. Baker told the gentleman to come to a specific address in Amman and bring \$4,000 in cash for 12 bottles of medicine to treat the disease. When the Libyan client arrived in Amman, he became suspicious of the transaction and decided to contact the Jordanian Ministry of Health to check the bona fides of the Bakers' operations. JFDA took advantage of the opportunity by having one of its inspectors pose as the taxi driver for the Libyan customer, and bring him to the office specified by Baker, which had no designated

marks of the political party led by Baker. Once Baker began counting the money and handed over the bottles, the Libyan called the driver to discretely indicate the deal was concluding, and the JFDA inspector made his entrance with Jordanian authorities.

15. (SBU) Given the political sensitivity of the case, JFDA contracted out the testing to another lab to ensure legitimacy and transparency in the process. The lab results showed there were no active ingredients in the Bakers' concoctions. According to Rawashdeh, Baker has no more than a fifth grade elementary school education, but like her brother, she obtained a degree from a Russian institution as a "professor of innovation." Rawashdeh noted that 20 years ago, she became relatively famous after appearing on the cover of a local Jordanian magazine as a popular fortune teller in a Palestinian refugee camp. In 2007, she set up and became the Secretary-General of the nationalist National Jordanian Party.

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Rubinstein